



APPLICATION REVIEW (SCREENING)

Published by Workforce & Staffing Consultants
Division of Human Resources, Department of Personnel & Administration



PREPARATION

- A. List and review the screening criteria for applicants. Screening criteria (Minimum qualifications and/or other requirements) should be identified prior to announcing the position. A good time to identify the screening criteria is during the job analysis when you meet with the appointing authority to discuss and clarify the requirements of the position. The screening criteria used in reviewing applications should be the same as that listed on the job announcements. The screening criteria should include the following:
1. EDUCATION
 - a. Level/how much?
 - b. Study fields
 - c. Related fields
 - d. Appropriate substitution(s)
 2. EXPERIENCE
 - a. How much?
 - b. What kind?
 - c. What level?
 - d. Appropriate substitution(s)
 3. OTHER REQUIREMENTS
 - a. Licenses, certificates, or registrations
 - b. Languages
 - c. Special elements – operation of specific type of equipment, software, willingness to travel, etc.
- B. Review the Minimum Qualifications (MQs) or job requirements as they were announced in the job announcement. Ensure the screening criteria for the application review are the same as the announced MQs/requirements from the job announcement. MQs/requirements on the job announcement take precedence over other screening criteria because it is the only information that was made available to individuals at the time of application.

REVIEW

The purpose of screening applications is generally to include applicants rather than exclude. The applicant is responsible for providing enough information to allow you to make an “informed” decision about his/her qualifications for the job. Apply the same criteria and definitions to all applicants during the application screening process. Be consistent in your decisions. If possible screen all the applications at the same time.

You should keep a written record of the reasons for your decisions pertaining to the application screening so information is readily available if an applicant calls with questions. Notes may be made directly on the application or you may use a separate screening sheet for notations if you want to avoid making notes on the application materials. Attachment A is an example of a screening sheet. Keep the following questions in mind as you review the applications and make “accept” and “reject” decisions:

- Can I defend my decision?
- Would another reasonable person make the same decision?
- Could the decision be considered arbitrary or capricious?
- Would I like to see my decision described on the front page of the local newspaper?

A. DATE RECEIVED – All applications should be date stamped when received. You should determine the date when applications will no longer be accepted and set a firm closing date (deadline) for receipt of applications. When reviewing the application, check the date the application was received or, if allowed by the job announcement, the “postmarked by” date. Any applications received after the closing date (deadline) on the announcement should be rejected. However, if you should decide to allow “late” applications for any justified reason, be consistent in the acceptance of these “late” applications to ensure you treat all applicants fairly.

B. COLORADO MAILING ADDRESS – All applicants must be state residents unless a residency waiver has been granted to fill the vacancy. Therefore, all applicants must have a Colorado mailing address and all correspondence should be sent to the Colorado address. Applications from non-residents must be rejected.

C. ORIGINAL SIGNATURE – An original signature should appear on the application, but if it doesn’t, the agency probably should not let the lack of original signature be the sole reason an individual is rejected from the exam process. It is recommended that you allow applicants who meet the Minimum Qualifications (MQs) for the position the opportunity to “provide an original signature” on the application during the exam process.

D. EDUCATION

1. DEGREE – Appropriate type and level, or one you will accept as a substitution (BA, MA, etc.). Was a transcript requested in the job announcement to verify the degree? If so, and no transcript is submitted with the application, it may be rejected. At some point in the exam process the degree will need to be verified following the process established by your agency.
2. STUDY FIELD – Announced study field or one you have defined as related.
3. COURSE WORK – If reviewing for specific course work and hours, you may request the applicant submit a transcript for verification. If no transcript is submitted with the application, it may be rejected.
4. CONDITIONAL ACCEPT – If an applicant has not graduated, is currently enrolled and will complete the required degree within 90 days you may wish to “conditionally accept” the individual. This allows the applicant to continue in the exam process but not be referable until proof of the degree is provided.

5. PARTIAL CREDIT

- a. Partial credit toward the education degree requirement may be given if an applicant has not graduated or received a degree. Education credit should be calculated at 30 semester hours per year. An Associate's Degree (2-year degree) is generally considered to be equal to 60 earned credit hours. A Bachelor's Degree (4-year degree) is generally considered to be equal to 120 earned credit hours; a Master's Degree equal to 150 credit hours; and a Doctorate Degree equal to 180 hours. The following formulas may be used to calculate the partial credit:

1. **# Hrs Completed / 30 semester hours = # of years credit toward Degree**

Example: The applicant completed 40 semester credit hours toward a Bachelor's Degree requirement. The applicant could receive up to 1-1/3 year of credit toward the required degree. ($40/30 = 1\text{-}1/3$ year.) **OR**

2. **# Hrs Completed / # Hours Required = % of required credit toward Degree**

Example: The applicant completed 40 semester credit hours toward a Bachelor's Degree requirement. ($40/120 = 33\%$ of degree requirement has been completed)

- b. Partial credit may also be given if the applicant has a degree in a study field other than the required or related study field. Generally, an applicant with a degree in an unrelated field would receive no more than two years (60 hours) of "core course" credit for the degree.
- c. Some colleges/universities report their earned course hours in quarter hours (QH) instead of semester hours (SH). Use the following formula when you need to convert quarter hours to semester hours:

Quarter Hours (QH) \Rightarrow Semester Hours (SH) ($\text{QH} \times 2/3 = \text{SH}$.)

Example: 45 Quarter Hours $\times 2/3 = 30$ Semester Hours

- E. EXPERIENCE – Past and current, both paid and volunteer experience. You may need to ask for clarification in some areas (e.g., an applicant may have worked for one employer in a number of different jobs, only listing the last or highest level job). You may need to ask for clarification of the job duties and percent of time spent in each area to determine if s/he meets the experience requirements.

1. DUTIES – Read them carefully noting such things as: 1) Job Title; 2) Nature of work; and 3) Level.
2. AMOUNT – Based on full time, 40 hours per week. (No credit is given toward the experience requirement for time worked over 40 hours per week.)
 - a. Determine if experience is qualifying experience before making notation of amount of time in total years and/or months.
 - b. Check that beginning and ending dates have the month and year. If only the year is given, you will need to follow your predetermined criteria for this situation (e.g., contact the applicant for clarification, not accept the experience, etc.).

- c. If only month and year are provided, count ending month but not beginning month (e.g., 6/99 to 9/99 would count as three months experience and 6/1/99 to 9/30/99 would count as four months experience).
3. PARTIAL or PRORATED – Credit may be given for part-time work but should be calculated by prorating the qualifying experience using the following formula:

$$(\text{\# of months worked} \times \text{hours per week worked}) / 40 = \text{months credit}$$

Example: An applicant works 20 hours a week and has worked for 24 months. Applying the formula: $(24 \times 20)/40 = 12$ months of qualifying work experience.
4. CONDITIONAL ACCEPT – You may wish to “conditionally accept” an application if the individual is currently employed in qualifying experience and will meet the experience requirements in 90 days. This allows the applicant to continue in the exam process but s/he is not referable until proof of meeting the experience requirements has been provided.
5. EXPERIENCE IN ASSOCIATION WITH DEGREE – Work experience gained as part of a degree or certificate program may be used only once as either “education” or “experience” not both.

F. SUBSTITUTIONS

1. EXPERIENCE FOR EDUCATION – State statute requires that experience be substituted for required education unless the education is required by law (i.e., a doctor must have a medical degree). Colorado Revised Statutes and Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director’s Administrative Procedures requires that applicants shall not be rejected solely because they do not have the education required in the class specifications except where education is a prerequisite for a profession or is required by law. These documents require that where education is not a prerequisite or is not required by law, an applicant’s experience shall be considered.
 - a. 12 months of related experience is equivalent to 30 semester hours (one year) of education.
 - b. Refer to the definitions you established for the required education when determining if the applicant’s experience is equivalent to the required education.
 - c. When substituting experience for education, experience should be at an appropriate level that would provide the same kind, amount and depth/breadth of knowledge and competencies that would be acquired by obtaining the required level of education. In general, if the education requirement is a bachelor’s degree, experience should be equivalent to an appropriate number of years of experience that would allow the applicant to gain the knowledge, skills and competencies similar to those gained through formal education to receive the required bachelor’s degree.
 - d. The experience equivalent that may be substituted for the required education may be determined by applying the formula:

$$\text{Months of Qualified Experience} \times 2.5 = \text{Semester Hours}$$

Example: Four years (48 months) of experience is equivalent to a bachelor’s degree (120 semester hours).

- e. If the job requires both experience and education, look for a sufficient amount of experience comparable to the number of years to meet both the experience and the required education. In general, if the minimum requirement is 3 years experience and a bachelor's degree, then the applicant should have a minimum of 7 years of experience total.

2. EDUCATION FOR EXPERIENCE – College credit in excess of the minimum requirements may be used to satisfy a deficiency in experience. Education is considered in semester hours only.

- a. If the applicant's education is in quarter hours convert to semester hours by using the formula:

$$\text{Quarter Hours} \times 2/3 = \text{Semester Hours}$$

- b. If the applicant's hours are reported in contact or classroom hours they should be converted to semester hours. It is generally accepted that 16 contact or classroom hours are equal to 1 earned semester hour. Use the following formula to convert contact or classroom hours:

$$\text{Contact Hours} / 16 = \text{Semester Hours}$$

- c. To determine the amount of education which may apply to the required experience use the formula to convert semester hours to months of experience:

$$\text{Semester Hours} / 2.5 = \text{Months of Experience}$$

- d. Education may be used only once to meet the education requirement or as a substitution for the experience requirement, not both.
- e. For education to be substituted for the required experience it should be in a study field which would have provided the applicant with training/education related to the work assignment.

3. EDUCATION FOR EDUCATION – Advanced degrees may be used to substitute for a lower level degree. You should clearly state in the job announcement if you will substitute a higher-level degree so applicants understand what will be accepted as substitutes for the minimum requirements of the job. The following statement is an example of what could appear in the announcement:

A master's degree in one of the required study fields may be substituted for the bachelors degree.

4. EDUCATION FOR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE – At the discretion of the agency, advanced degrees may be used to substitute for a lower level degree **and** a portion or all of the required experience. The agency should clearly state in the job announcement that a higher-level degree can be substituted for education and experience. The agency should also state in the announcement how the higher-level degree will be applied to the required education and experience. The following statement is an example of what could appear in the announcement.

A master's degree in one of the required study fields may be substituted for the bachelor's degree and one year of the required experience.

OUTCOME

After completing your review of all the applications you will have a clear idea of which applications should be “accepted” and “not accepted”. You will also probably have some applications that you are not sure about; these applications are considered a “maybe”. It is recommended that you get a second opinion (2nd Review) of the “maybe” applications that you are unsure about. You should discuss the “maybe” applications with another Human Resource Specialist, your supervisor or a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for the position; or all three if you feel it is required. However, you should make the final decision of accepting or rejecting these “maybe” applications. It is generally better to allow an /applicant to continue in the process and let the “test” screen him/her out if the MQs are marginally met.

Remember you should keep a written record of the reasons for your decisions on applications. Notes may be made directly on the application or you may use a separate screening sheet for notations if you want to avoid making notes on the application materials. Attachment A is an example of a screening sheet.

A. NOTIFICATION of NOT ACCEPTED – State of Colorado Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director’s Administrative Procedure P-4-10 requires that all applicants who apply for specifically announced positions be notified whether they qualify. To comply with the intent of the Rules, agencies should also notify applicants for agency positions if their applications are not accepted by the agency. Agencies are highly encouraged to provide the notification of rejection of an application in writing. The agency’s notification letter should also state the reason(s) the individual’s application was not accepted.

1. Procedure P-8-21 of the Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director’s Administrative Procedures gives applicants the right to request that the Personnel Director review any application rejection by an agency. Procedure P-8-21 also requires the applicant file a request for review of an application rejection with the director within 10 days after notice or knowledge of the action. In accordance with this procedure, agencies are required to notify applicants of their due process rights under the Director’s Review process. Additionally, under Procedure P-8-21, the date the applicant received the notice of the application rejection is used to determine if the request for Director’s review is filed timely. Therefore, it is highly recommended that agencies provide the notice of application rejection in writing in order to establish the timeline for an applicant’s request of a Director’s Review of his/her application rejection. Two options for providing the review process is defined in paragraph 7 below. Agencies are encouraged to develop standard procedures to ensure that due process rights are provided to applicants pertaining to an application rejection.
2. Procedure P-8-20 of the Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director’s Administrative Procedures encourages applicants to attempt to informally resolve any disagreement pertaining to their application rejection with the agency by contacting the agency within 5 days of receipt of the notice letter of application rejection. Agencies are encouraged to also communicate with the applicant to provide sufficient information to the applicant so the reason(s) for his/her application rejection are fully understood. This communication can be done in writing or verbally, at the agencies’ discretion. The agency may also want to provide the applicant with information concerning other job opportunities for which the applicant may be qualified.
3. An agency’s attempt to informally resolve any disagreement pertaining to an application rejection shall not restrict the applicant’s right to request the Personnel Director review his/her application rejection by an agency.

4. Additionally, any contact by the applicant or the agency in an attempt to achieve resolution of the application rejection shall not extend the 10-day time limit for the applicant to file his written request for the Personnel Director to review his/her application rejection in accordance with Procedure P-8-21 of the Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures.
 5. If you should desire or need more information on the procedures for conducting a Director's Review of an agency's application rejection, please refer to the **Director's Review of Application Rejection** Operational Guideline under Selection Process on the Division of Human Resources Web page.
 6. Agencies have two options on how to provide the Director's application review process statement to the applicant: 1) include the review process statement on the Job Announcement, **or** 2) include the review process statement on the notice of application rejection letter to the applicant. Agencies should choose one procedure to ensure consistency within the agency.
 7. Agencies may design their own notice letter of application rejection wording. However, agencies should include the following information as a minimum on the applicant's notification letter of application rejection. See Attachment B for a sample application reject notification letter.
 - Notice that application has been received and reviewed for a position (identify the position).
 - Notice that the application has been reviewed against the announced minimum requirements for the position.
 - Notice that the application has been rejected and the reason for the rejection.
 - Notice that the applicant has 5 days from the date of receipt of the notice letter of application rejection to contact the agency in an attempt to informally resolve any questions pertaining to the announced minimum requirements or to resolve questions pertaining to the rejection of the application.
 - Identify the individual to contact in the agency for answers to questions pertaining to the announced minimum requirements or to informally resolve questions pertaining to the rejection of the application.
 - (If not included in the job announcement) Notice that the applicant has a right to request that the Personnel Director review his/her application rejection and may file a written request for the Director's review within 10 days from the date of receipt of the notice letter of application rejection.
 - Notice of specific information that is required to be included in the request for the Personnel Director's review of the rejected application as listed under Director's Application Review in this document and in Administrative Procedure P-8-21 of the current State of Colorado Personnel Board Rules and Personnel Director's Administrative Procedures.
- B. NOTIFICATION of ACCEPTS – Normally an applicant that meets the MQs is not notified of his/her status. The test scheduling notice generally serves in place of a separate notice of acceptance. Agencies may wish to notify applicants who have been accepted, particularly if it may be several weeks before the testing process begins.
- C. REQUEST FOR TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS – If the applicant has included a request for testing accommodations with the application form, a note should be made to accommodate the applicant's needs.

ATTACHMENT A

EXAMPLE OF SCREENING SHEET

Job Title: Administrative Assistant II
Position Number: GJB #113
Announcement Closing Date: 3/6/2001

Name: _____ SSN: _____

Minimum Qualifications: _____

_____ Five years of general clerical

_____ Two years at senior level

_____ Education substitution

_____ Other

Codes in ADS: _____

Previous Test
Scores: _____

ATTACHMENT B

Sample Application Reject Notice

Date

Applicant's Name
Applicant's Address
City, State Zip

Registration Number:
Social Security Number:

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for your interest in employment with the State of Colorado. Your application has been received for the following position:

Human Resources Specialist II
Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration

Your application has been reviewed by a qualified Human Resource Specialist against the announced requirements to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for this job opening. We regret that your application for this position does not demonstrate that you have the required:

Education

If you have additional education that was not provided in your application you are strongly encouraged to contact _____ (agency HR person to contact for information/resolution) at _____ (phone #) immediately to provide the information. Additionally, if you have questions pertaining to your qualifications not meeting the minimum requirements; or to resolve any questions pertaining to your application rejection, you must contact the above agency representative within 5 days from the receipt of this notice letter of your application rejection.

(If you did not provide the due process notice for Director's Review on the Job Announcement, you must include the following notice on the rejection letter.)

You may also file a request with the Personnel Director for review of this issue within ten days of the date of receipt of this notice. A request for Director's review must include: 1) Job title; 2) Agency involved; 3) Name of the agency representative spoken to during informal resolution attempts; 4) Date(s) of the conversation; 5) Specific issue; and 6) Reason(s) it is believed the decision is arbitrary, capricious, or contrary to rule or law. The request for review should be directed to:

*State Personnel Board and Director
Attention: Appeals Processing
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 1420
Denver, CO 80203*

(Signature)